



"YOU CAN HAVE ALL THE MONEY AND POWER
IN THE WORLD BUT IT CAN'T BUY YOU
HAPPINESS AND IT CERTAINLY CAN'T BUY YOU
LOVE."

Forbidden by losersrichie

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Summary: The city of New York. 1952. The boy with the rich heart meets high class Mike Wheeler.

1. 1

"You can have all the money and power in the world but it can't buy you happiness and it certainly can't buy you love." These were the words my Father expressed to me this morning on our way to the city. This was our usual routine; Waking up, feeding the chickens, immediately leaving and not coming back until 9pm. I could say that I'm not a normal kid my age, I don't get the chance to go to school. You see, my family is pretty poor. By family I mean me and my Father. I used to have two grown brothers but they left us a year ago to Enlist the Army. My Dad told me there was a big War happening in South Korea because North Korea invaded them. I had troubles sleeping since I knew why they left us so quickly, I was terrified the Koreans would find where we live and assassinate us.

Now I know, none of this would really happen. I just had a crazy imagination of a 14 years old boy and I couldn't control it.

"Will, you're getting my box out of what?" My father spoke up, getting me out of my thoughts. I was still sitting in the parked car while my Dad was already positioning his easel on the sidewalk. I guess I let the thoughts gnaw my mind once again.

"Coming!" I exclaimed as I quickly grabbed the box filled with paint, crayons and brushes in the backseat. My Dad's a painter but when it comes to making money, he does portraits of people, especially women's. He loves them.

"Here." I said. "Can I try to draw a portrait today? I think I'm ready."

"Not yet Will. You have to get better." My Father told me. I sighed. "It's hard work, son."

"I'm getting bored. Can you at least draw something else than Womans? Maybe Mens? Or even boys! Everybody loves a good drawing."

"Ladies are the only people interested and patient enough. They got nothing to do all day since their husbands are at work."

I tilted my head back in a sign of annoyance and sat along the sidewalk. All I wanted was to draw a portrait and make a little money so I could buy these candies I wanted so bad the other day.

My Father was already getting it's first person of the day as I sat there, watching people walking by on the other side of the street. Their lives seemed so much more fun than mine, especially when you saw kids with their lunchboxes, ready for their day at school. I wish I could be one of them.

I stood up from my sitting position and interrupted my Father as he was speaking with the Lady in front of him. "Dad? Could I please have a quarter? I haven't had breakfast." I said. He glanced at me and got some coins out of his pocket.

"Don't go too far."

"I won't. Thank you Daddy!" I exclaimed and started running towards the candy shop. I was so excited. I was on cloud 9 when I entered the shop. It was filled with candies of all sorts and toys were everywhere to be found. This is what dreams were made of.

"Looking for anything in particular?" The owner of the store asked me. I shook my head no. My shyness was taking over me once again. Talking to people was a very difficult task, it was probably the reason why I couldn't make any friends.

"Alright. If you need anything don't be shy, I'm always available." He said. I proceeded to nod once again and went to the first aisle to look at the candies. Bazooka Gum, Necco Wafers, Tootsie Roll, Sugar Babies, everything I heard about on the radio were there in front of me, It was so exciting.

"Hell, I'd rather be stuck with this frickin' Bitch than having to deal with you ever again!" A voice coming from the outside of the shop shouted. I raised my head up to look out the window. A boy, who looked like my age was arguing with a man. The man slapped him in the face as he pronounced the word "Bitch." Making me jump in astonishment. It's not everyday you see a kid getting slapped in the middle of the street. I quickly got out of the shop to look at them from the other side of the street, the kid was wearing this orange

cardigan with a clean white blouse underneath it, a red tie completed the whole look. His hair was well coiffed, tons of grease was keeping it in place. Glasses were also visible on his face. He seemed like he came from a good family but didn't inherit the good manners rich people usually had. Never have I ever heard a kid my age pronouncing such bad words before.

The man shouted things about a record deal they couldn't cancel and that the kid needed to act properly in order to keep their careers safe. I frowned, not understanding anything they were talking about. What was a record deal?

The well dressed boy was left alone in front of the place where they came out of. He seemed unhappy, upset as the man got called in by people who were dressed in nice suits. They all looked so intimidating.

"What are you staring at, nerd?"

It was not until I realized he was speaking to me that my eyes opened widely. "Oh boy." I said to myself. I immediately reached for the door of the candy shop to get back in but it was too late. A hand grabbed the back of my shirt, pulling me away from the door.

"You spy on other people huh? You were eavesdropping were you?" The kid asked me, I turned around to face him. "What have you heard, prick?" He pushed me in the shoulder and snatched the newsie hat that was sitting on my head.

"N—Nothing." I murmured. "Give it back."

"Who are you working for? Russians?" He asked as he spun the hat with his finger.

"W—What?" I fixed my hair quickly as I tried to grab the hat in his hand. Obviously, he wouldn't let me.

"Why did you seem so curious? You're a fan?"

"A fan? I—I don't even know you!"

"Sure you do." He replied.

"I—I don't."

"Oh. I know why." The kid chuckled. "You're a hobo? It explains why you're dressed like this."

"I'm—I'm not a hobo!" I exclaimed. I felt so attacked by him that my timid self wasn't there anymore. If there's one thing my Father told me was to never let anyone disrespect me. "You bug me. Give me my hat back."

"What are you then if you're not a hobo?"

"I draw portraits and—and you clearly, you're a show off *. I can tell by your egocentric self."

"Wow. I'm flattered but no. My Dad's a show off. I'm just a singer."

"A singer?" I asked.

"Yeah. I'm on this Tv show called Your Hit Parade."

I shrugged. "I don't know—Never heard of that." He looked at me. A smile formed on his lips.

"You're kind of an oddball ." He told me before giving me my hat back. "I like it."

"What do you mean you like it?" I looked at him as he crossed the street to go back to the small building he came out of.

"See you around. That's a very stylish hat." He exclaimed, pointing my head. He stopped walking mid-road to look at me. "What's your name?"

"W-Will." I responded.

"Right-o. I'm Mike."

I nodded and smiled at him, happy I might have just made a friend. A car stopped due to Mike standing in the middle of the street, immediately honking at him. He gave him a dirty look before raising his middle finger up at the Man standing in the white car.

"Eat shit!" Mike shouted.

"Pardon?" The angry man got out of his car. "Excuse me young man? Your manners!"

I held myself back from bursting into laughter, This kid was goofy. I watched him run away from the man as he waved me goodbye.

"Au revoir, Will!"

Show off: Slang word used in the 1950's. Representing an actor.

2. 2

"How many portraits have you made today?" I asked my Dad as I took a bite of the slice of Spam sitting on my plate.

"Three." He desperately said. I nodded and stayed quiet. He seemed upset.

"I can help you tomorrow if you want to." I proposed to him. Hoping this idea would make him feel better.

"I already said it once, Will. We're not doing that."

"Dad, I can help."

"Will." He stared at me. "We're not starting that again."

"But—"

"Enough." He stood up and grabbed my empty plate. "We'll just go in a different area of the city tomorrow. It will get better."

I didn't bother to reply and headed to bed. I was frustrated. My Dad never let me do anything, I was good at drawing and he knew it, so why was he stopping me?

Hours passed and I stayed awake, rolling in my bed. My Dad was fast asleep next to me. We slept in the same bed since we couldn't afford another one, so, I was used to my Dad snoring directly into my ears.

My watch indicated 10pm which was pretty late for me, but my will to sleep couldn't be found tonight. I quietly got out of bed and grabbed my jacket, immediately heading outside. Maybe a walk could help me find sleep.

"Grab it! Grab all of them!" The voice of a boy said. Loud noises came from a small shop near the house. As I slowly got closer, a loud crunching sound could be heard, like I just stepped on glass. The main window of the store was shattered, making it obvious it was a robbery. I couldn't hear them talking anymore, making me lose track of them.

"Who's in there?" I exclaimed as I debated on whether I should get in or not.

"Don't move!" One of the kid came out of nowhere with a knife pointed at me. I gasped and took a step back.

"I'm not doing anything." I replied and raised my hands up.

"Who are you?" He asked. "What do you want?"

"N-Nothing." I panicked.

"He asked you a question. Answer!" Another kid joined him and grabbed me by the neck.

"Will. I-I'm Will." I responded. Almost out of breath. His grip was strong. "Let me go!"

His hand got looser around my neck. "He's useless. Let's just go before the Police finds us."

"No! Finish him off, he saw us! He's gonna tell the Police!" The boy said.

My breathing intensified when I realised what they wanted to do to me, the only thing my brain was telling me to do was run; which is exactly what I did. I heard them chasing me. I just ran so fast, not even looking back once. I turned left in a small street to catch my breath. In no way they'd find me here. I raised my head up as I saw them running in another direction, meaning I was safe from now on.

"I'll never be free from your smile so tender. The sweet surrender in your eyes..." A voice could be heard, definitely coming from a radio. I slowly started walking, following the sound of the music.

"How can I be free when I still remember

How you could thrill me with a sigh.." The song kept on playing. It took me in front of a Tv shop, where many Tv's were displayed, only one of them was turned on. The owner probably forgot to turn it off before closing.

Who I saw on Tv took my breath away.

"Mike." I breathed out. I had a hard time believing him this morning when he told me he was a singer, it seemed fake. I didn't believe him until now, until I saw him on the Tv with my own eyes, he was still wearing the same clothes he wore today and his voice sounded beautiful. I smiled to myself as I watched attentively his performance. He looked so professional, like he had been doing it for years. He really was talented.

"Oh, I'll never be free." I hummed as I made my way back home. I can say that I fell asleep the minute I got back into bed. The song playing on repeat in my head.

The sun was shining through the clouds in the busy streets of Manhattan. The area my Dad decided to go was very different from the one we were used to go to, he definitely had more people interested in his portraits than before, I was happy for him. I was even closer to the place I met Mike yesterday, meaning I could go see him whenever I wanted to since he was coming outside often, but I was way too shy to approach him, I feared he wouldn't remember me.

"Will?" I raised my head up. It was Mike. "How long before you actually decide to come and talk to me instead of staying there?" He giggled.

I stood up. Surprised he remembered my name, remembered me. "W—What do you mean?"

"Don't pretend like you haven't been spying on me all morning." He smiled. "I saw you."

"I—I didn't think you'd remember me." I stuttered.

"Will, how can I forget about you? Especially with that hat. You're unforgettable." He laughed and took it off my head.

"Can't forget you either, especially with those clothes." I chuckled, referring to the brown slacks and striped shirt he was wearing.

"They're custom made. What's wrong with them?" He pouted.

"Nothing. They're just very unique." I replied.

"I could say the same for you."

I smiled and stared at the ground. "I saw you on Tv yesterday."

"You did?"

I nodded. "You have a great voice."

"Thank you. I'm glad you think so." A big smile formed on his face.

"What was the song?" I asked. "The one you sang I-I mean."

"I'll never be free. I can't remember the singer though—But if I ever end up knowing, I'll let you know." He paused and bit his lip. "Wait, do you tend to have some free time?"

"I do." I replied.

I was currently experiencing something really amazing, I had a friend and I felt like we were getting along so well.

We both jumped on a merchandise train, heading to Mike's house. I never done something this reckless in my whole entire life before and I knew my Dad would be so mad if he ended up knowing but, I was genuinely happy and it's all that mattered.

"If we get busted I'm putting this on you." I giggled.

"Really, You'd sold me out like that?"

I nodded, obviously joking. He raised his eyebrows and pushed me in the shoulder.

"I'm gonna push you off this train." He said, we both laughed uncontrollably the whole ride, joking each other here and there. It felt great have a little laugh.

The minute we entered his house he ran to his living room, looking for something. In the meantime, I looked around. His house was huge, a never ending corridor was in front of me, covered with this

ruby red carpet. Big paintings were also found on every wall in the house, it was breathtaking.

"Mike?" I looked up at the ceiling.

"What?" I heard his footsteps coming near me.

I pointed to where I was staring. "What—What is that?"

"That?" He chuckled. "It's a chandelier."

"It's beautiful." I glanced at him and then back at the chandelier.

"First time seeing one?" He looked back at me.

"First time seeing one." I replied. "What is it for though?"

"It lits up. Just like a regular light—It just looks fancier and cost way more money. That's what my Dad said."

I frowned. "Well if it does the same as a regular light, why spending all the money in the world for it?"

He scoffed. "Sometimes people like to show what they have in order to feel appreciated, or valued. Especially my Father."

"Well, Thanks to God you're not like him."

He looked at me and smiled. "You know—You're the first person to ever tell me something like that."

"It's the truth." I looked at him as well. "I may not know your Dad or—even you that much, but as far as I know, you were the first person to approach me without discriminating me—ever."

"Why would I discriminate you?" He quietly asked.

I shrugged. "I'm different than you or the people you surround yourself with probably. You're out on this big stage on Tv, cameras shoved to your face with these crazy clothes no one can actually afford—"

"It doesn't represent who I am, Will." He stared at me. "I know what

you are—I don't care about your social status. None of this matters." I looked at him as he spoke. "I'm not what I seem to be, what I get pressured to do is not who I am."

"Pressured?" I frowned. "You don't enjoy singing?"

"I used to. Until my Dad took it too far and made money off my back."

"I don't understand."

"He put me on this Tv show when I was seven years old. it was a dream at first. Then, I grew up and it got worse. I wanted it to end but my Father kept on signing contracts over and over without asking me, so—I'm stuck being controlled by a selfish bitch."

"And your Dad." I added.

"Exactly." He looked at me. "My Dad's the one that slapped me on the face yesterday, just so you know."

"Oh, I know. I figured it out."

A slight smile appeared on his face. "I want to show you something, follow me." He said, immediately changing the subject.

"What is it?" I followed him.

"Here's the song. I'll never be free." He handed me a vinyl. "By Kay Starr."

"Y—You found it." I smiled and looked at the picture on the cover.

"I just did. I knew my Mother would have the song. Everything sounds so good on a vinyl."

"That's very kind of you. T—Thank you."

"You can keep it." He looked at me and smiled. "A gift, from me to you."

I kept quiet and smiled as well, I finally owned my very first vinyl

ever and even though I didn't had a record player at home, I still felt happy to own one. I handed the record to Mike and looked at him right in the eyes.

"Play the damn song." I said.

3. 3

I've always wondered how my life would be like if I was one of them, one of the rich kids. Would my dad stay this kind and considerate? That, I don't know. It's not that I was envying Mike's life—Well, sort of. I just wanted to be a normal kid for once, being able to go to school was a dream of mine. It may seem like the most nerdiest thing someone could ever say but to me, having all the knowledge was primordial. My dad taught me a lot over my 14 years of life, of course, but not everything. Mike however, he seemed like he knew everything. He taught me about UFO's, which is something I never heard about until now. Apparently there's some sorts of creatures out there who visits us often on our planet to spy on us, if you look up in the sky at nighttime, you could come across their "ship" as Mike called it. The "ship" has the form of a disk and it can fly like an airplane apparently. I thought nothing of it at first, it was entertaining and we had fun. But then, he took a grease pencil and drew this monstrous creature with big black eyes and an odd shaped face.

"That's how they look like, apparently." Mike told me. I was petrified and I immediately stopped laughing. It was the most grotesque looking thing I had ever seen. And because of that, I knew I wasn't going to be able to sleep tonight. To make it better however, Mike told me his dad was out of town for the night. Meaning, he had the whole house to himself. He asked if I wanted to stay over since he hated being alone. I said yes before calling my dad to inform him I was staying over at a friend. He seemed surprised since I didn't inform him about my new friend. He even wondered how I knew the phone number of the small restaurant he had been in front of all day, it was the location he chose to do his portraits this morning and I remembered. I told him I always kept doing what he told me; To always ask for the phone number closest to the area he's working in case of an emergency. And it paid off well this time, because now Mike and I were playing this board game called Battleship in the middle of his living room. It was fun but very complex. Obviously, Mike kept on swearing the whole time.

"You're really acting like you're the smartest huh? You keep on making my frickin' boats sink!"

"Don't be a sore loser. It's hasard."

"Hasard? You've been sinking all of my boats for the past 5 minutes, it's impossible!" He exclaimed. "You must be cheating!"

I giggled and looked at him. "I'm not."

"Well, for someone who doesn't go to school you really are a frickin' genius."

"My ears are bleeding from all the swearing you've been doing." I laughed as I placed my hands over my ears.

"Oh cry me a river, fragile boy." He playfully said and threw me one of the small boat from his set. I chuckled.

"That's what I was saying, sore loser."

"Cheater." He stood up and grabbed the small boat from the ground. I looked at him as he did so and pushed him with my foot. He tripped on his knees and turned his head at me.

"You want to start this now, shithead?" He grinned.

I nodded and went to push him again but he stopped me by grabbing my foot. He looked at my shoes and frowned.

"Are these even shoes anymore?" He asked. I shrugged and stayed there with my leg in the air as I observed him. I never really took care of my shoes, they were damaged and very faded and I couldn't do anything to change it.

"Are they even comfortable?" He added.

"More comfortable than the position I'm in right now, can you let go of my leg?"

"Ha-Ha." He said sarcastically, letting go of it "All right buttercup, come on."

"Where?" I watched him heading upstairs, I followed him to his room. I stopped directly in the door frame and glanced at Mike. "What does

buttercup mean?" Never have I ever heard that expression before, I really wondered where he took all of these words. "I'm giving you friendly nicknames." He replied. I didn't question it more and joined him as he searched for something in his huge wardrobe. In the meantime, I looked around his bedroom, you could tell he was a fan of music; Vinyls, posters and even a guitar hanging on the wall were decorating his room, His bed was very well done, like a maid carefully did it for him. I could go on and on about the details. Let's just say, his bedroom was breathtaking, definitely bigger than my own house. I kept on looking around until a frame sitting on his nightstand caught my attention, Mike and two other boys were standing next to him, all of them smiling proudly. Mike's smile stood out to me the most, he looked so happy. I really hoped one day someone would like me enough to put a photograph of me in their room.

"These are my friends—Used to."

"Where are they?" I glanced at him then back at the frame.

"Long gone." He replied softly.

"I'm sorry."

"They're not dead, Will." He chuckled. "They decided to leave when I—I wanted them to accept me as who I really was."

I frowned. "What do you mean?"

"It's not important, in fact. Since I don't have to pretend I still have them as friends anymore, I can get rid of this picture." He took the frame and tore up the photograph in pieces. I don't know what he meant by "I wanted them to accept me as who I really was." and I felt like I needed to know but also, it was probably none of my business.

"Yeah, you're probably wondering why I pretended to still have them as friends don't you?" He asked. "Well, I didn't want my dad to figure out. The less I talk to him the better. He found these friends for me so he would be mad if he knew they dumped me, he would think it's my fault." I looked at him as he rambled about his dad and such. I felt sad for Mike, clearly he was being controlled 24/7 by his father, I

can't imagine how I would feel like in this situation. He went very deeply into how he felt about this crazy situation, how it took him time to figure himself out because of his dad controlling him and to this day he still had trouble. He said he wanted to tell me a secret but shrugged it off last minute, leaving me hanging, wondering what was that secret and why was he so hesitant about it? When I told him that I hoped he didn't killed someone he laughed, telling me I was crazy to even think as such. I mean, everything's possible.

"Goodnight Will."

"Goodnight Mike." I replied as I was laying on a small mattress next to Mike's bed. He was kind enough to let me borrow one of his silk pyjama. It felt so nice against my skin, like I was laying in heaven. It was definitely different from the cotton clothes I was used to wear for bed. As I closed my eyes, my brain automatically pictured this creepy drawing Mike did earlier. I tried to shut it off but it wouldn't, my mind just kept on running, thinking about all the possibilities; "What if a UFO is right over the house right now?" The small voice in my head said. I opened my eyes and looked around the pitch black bedroom to look for anything anormal. I was scared and I knew that if I kept on staring in the dark long enough, my eyes would start playing tricks on me.

"Mike? Mike I'm scared." I admitted as I placed the blanket over my head.

"What?" He murmured, half asleep.

"Do you think there's a UFO over us right now? Spying on us sleeping?"

"What?" He said again, this time he was more awake. "Will, don't think about that. We're safe."

"I-I can't. I have his horrific face you drew in my head." I stuttered. He stood up from his laying position and patted repetitively on the right side of his bed.

"Come here."

"You want me to sleep in your bed? With you?"

"Stop asking questions. Just—sleep with me. My bed is protected from the aliens."

"Aliens?"

"Yeah, that's what these creatures are called. Well—At least that's how I know them as."

"Oh, dear god." I sighed and laid next to him. He shushed me and giggled in a soft way.

"Get some sleep now, Willy."

4. 4

Three days had passed since I last heard of Mike. Somehow, I couldn't see him in the studio he was normally seen in. I had no idea where this kid had been off to for the past days. It got me some time to focus on what I loved doing the most though, which was making art. I was in the process of sketching an army of Aliens, as Mike called them. They weren't scaring me anymore. In fact, they were quite interesting. I loved how different and awesome they looked. Three days ago I never thought I would even be saying this, but, I kinda wish I was a part of them. I know it probably wasn't the case but I felt like Mike was avoiding me. I couldn't help but think; "Wow, I really am a failure and it may be the reason why he doesn't want to have anything to do with me." Afterall, he was a successful rich kid and I was...not. Maybe if I went to the same school as him, we would be able to talk everyday.

"Dad, what do you think of me?" I asked as I turned to face him.

"Mh—Well. You're an amazing son."

"No I mean—as a person, not your son."

"Let's see, you're a very talented kid." He pointed at me with his paintbrush. "You're always the one lifting me up through hard times —"

"Yeah, because I'm the only person that is with you on the daily."

"Will." He put down his tools and sat next to me. "Don't make yourself small, you're the most unique and wonderful son I ever had. You're a gift for this earth, I see great things coming for you. You'll change this world." He grabbed my face so I could look at him.

"I want to go to school like other kids my age." I spoke up. I never told my dad about how bad I dreamt of going to school, he probably always thought I was happy to be that kid who gets to spend his days with his father, but it wasn't the case. My dad was a great company and all but to be honest, I was getting tired of sitting on a sidewalk every day and not learning anything.

"I'll send you to school if that's what you want Will, but you have to wait. I have to save money—which is hard."

"W-Why are we poor and others aren't?" This question peaked my curiosity. Why do we have to be divided by the amount of money we have in our pockets? Why couldn't we be all equal?

"That's the way life is, son. It's always going to be this way." He paused. "Tell you what, we may be poor but we have something that others don't."

"What is?" I asked.

"A rich heart."

"And—What am I supposed to do with that?"

"You can do anything with a rich heart. Especially yours, Will. You are one lucky soul." And with that, I understood how much my dad was observant when it came to me, he definitely saw more in me than I did. He proceeded to give me a small pat on the back before going back to his work. Maybe I do have a rich heart and it may be the reason why I always feel the need to help one another. I care way more about other people's happiness rather than mine.

Laying in bed, I was staring at the Vinyl Mike had the kindness to give me the other day. Wondering what I could even do with it since I didn't own a record player.

"What am I going to do with you?" I asked. Obviously the Vinyl wouldn't reply back, I know. Sadly I had no one to talk to except for myself since my dad recently left town to get a few extra money. I really appreciated everything he did for me, it meant a lot. My father was a very courageous man.

As I slowly drowned in my thoughts, the phone rang. For some reason it sounded louder than before, maybe because I've been in pure silence for the past hour but either way, I felt like I could turn deaf at any minute.

"Will Byers speaking, who is this?"

"Glad to hear I called the right place."

"Mike?"

"Hi Will." He spoke up. I stayed quiet, not really knowing what to say. I haven't heard from him a week.

"I'm so sorry I haven't been there for the past week. I got very busy." He added.

"How did you get this number?" I asked in a bitter tone.

"It don't matter. Wait—Are you angry at me?" He chuckled but not in a amused way, it seemed more sarcastic.

"N-No." I lied. "I just thought you—forgot about me. That's all."

"I did not, Will. I would never."

"Where were you?" I asked, obviously worried.

"I—Can we meet?" He said. Completely ignoring what I asked him. Eventhough he had an odd behaviour, I agreed. Because who would say no to a friend, right?

We met on Sutter Avenue in the dark of the night. Taking the train alone was definitely scary, luckily the train was empty the whole ride which was a great thing. My dad would still kill me if he knew I left the house past nine.

As I stepped foot on the humid concrete, the hat sitting on my head was quickly removed in a very uncaring way.

"Do you ever wear other hats?" I recognized Mike's voice and immediately turned around, I couldn't help but smile at how he always loved to joke around with me.

"Do you ever do something else besides snatching my hat off my head when you see me?" I joked.

"You look better without it." He said playfully.

I frowned. "What does that mean?"

"It means—stop wearing it or i'll have to offer you a new one. In better condition." He looked at me before putting it back on my head. I adjusted it to my comfort and glanced at him. His right eye and cheek had a dark purple tint, I couldn't see clearly since it was so dark but when I moved him under a light pole, I saw it clearly. Someone definitely hurted him for something he did.

"I'll let you guess." He chuckled nervously. Without even saying his name I understood who it was;

His father, obviously.

"I'm sorry." Was all I could reply. "Why?"

"He caught me stealing again."

"Again? What do you mean? Who do you steal from?"

"From that man on Broadway who sells these stupid magazines called Physique Pictorial."

"I don't know what that is." I replied. Mike looked at me and nodded, telling me it was better this way, better that I kept on not knowing what these magazines were about. He should've never told me because now I wanted to find out what they were actually about, for his dad to hurt him the way he did, it must be pretty bad.

"Why did you wanted to meet me?" I asked as I laid down on the tall grass next to him, we found a sweet spot where the moonlight shined on us. The fresh breeze was caressing my cheek, reminding me of the sweet touch of my mother. It was a clear sky kind of night, the stars were visible everywhere you looked at, making me feel at ease.

"I missed your company." His arms were resting behind his head as he looked at me. I smiled.

"If you would've never avoided me for a whole week in the first place maybe you—" Mike cut me half sentence.

"I did not avoid you, Will. I had a rough week. If only you knew."

"I'm listening." I stood up from my comfortable laying position and gave him all of my attention. He sighed before letting out a small "Okay." and proceeded to tell me how much he hated singing on live Tv. He found the whole thing very stressful, so stressful he could barely get sleep at night. He always had nightmares about his dad shouting at him or hurting him physically. I felt bad for Mike, surely he didn't deserve to live in fear of his own father. My heart warmed up when he told me he wished for me to be able to go to school with him. Kids apparently made fun of him constantly, saying his singing was bad and how much of a fool he made of himself on Tv. If I was there I could make things go so much better, according to Mike. I gave him the tightest and warmest hug I could as I heard him sobbing on my shoulder.

Comforting a friend made me feel so great, like I could take over the world. I had so much love and sweetness to give and Mike was one of those people that screamed for it the most. He needed to feel loved and cared for and it's exactly what I would give to him until he understands.

Maybe my dad was right, I do have a rich heart.